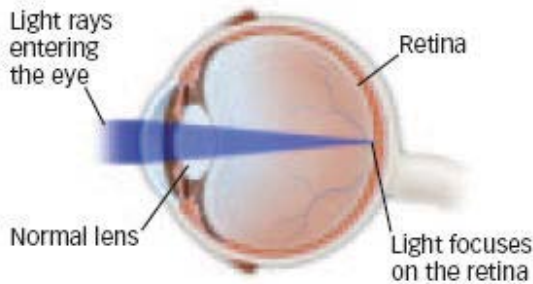


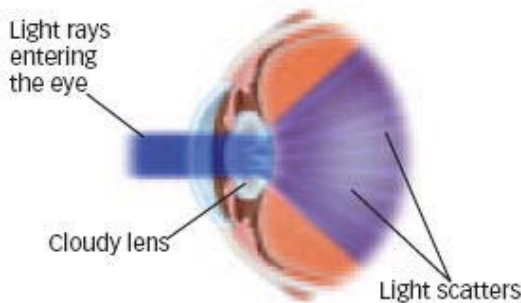
Cataract Surgery

What is a cataract?

A cataract is a clouding of the eye's naturally clear lens. The lens focuses light rays on the retina — the layer of light-sensing cells lining the back of the eye — to produce a sharp image of what we see. When the lens becomes cloudy, light rays cannot pass through it easily, and vision is blurred.



Light rays entering an eye with a normal lens.



Light rays entering an eye with a cataract. When a cataract forms, the lens of your eye is cloudy. Light cannot pass through it easily, and your vision

What causes cataracts?

Cataract development is a normal process of aging, but cataracts also develop from eye injuries, certain diseases or medications. Your genes may also play a role in cataract development.

How can a cataract be treated?

A cataract may not need to be treated if your vision is only slightly blurry. Simply changing your eyeglass prescription may help to improve your vision for a while. There are no medications, eyedrops, exercises or glasses that will cause cataracts to disappear once they have formed. Surgery is the only way to remove a cataract. When you are no longer able to see well enough to do the things you like to do, cataract surgery should be considered.

In cataract surgery, the cloudy lens is removed from the eye through a surgical incision. In most cases, the natural lens is replaced with a permanent intraocular lens (IOL) implant.

What can I expect if I decide to have cataract surgery?

Before Surgery

To determine if your cataract should be removed, your ophthalmologist (Eye M.D.) will perform a thorough eye examination. Before surgery, your eye will be measured to determine the proper power of the intraocular lens that will be placed in your eye. Ask your ophthalmologist if you should continue taking your usual medications before surgery. You should make arrangements to have someone drive you home after surgery.

The Day of Surgery

Surgery is usually done on an outpatient basis, so you come in to have your surgery and go home the same day. You will be asked to skip breakfast.

When you arrive for surgery, you will be given eyedrops and perhaps a mild sedative to help you relax. A local anesthetic will numb your eye. The skin around your eye will be thoroughly cleansed, and sterile coverings will be placed around your head. Your eye will be kept open by an eyelid speculum. You may see light and movement, but you will not be able to see the surgery while it is happening.

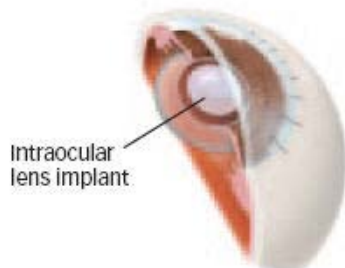
Under an operating microscope, a small incision is made in the eye. Tiny surgical instruments are used to remove the cloudy lens from the eye. The back membrane of the lens (called the posterior capsule) is left in place.



During cataract surgery, tiny instruments are used to remove the cloudy lens from the eye.



An intraocular lens (iol) implant.



In cataract surgery, the intraocular lens replaces the eye's natural lens.

After surgery is completed, your doctor may place a shield over your eye. After a short stay in the outpatient recovery area, you will be ready to go home.

Following Surgery

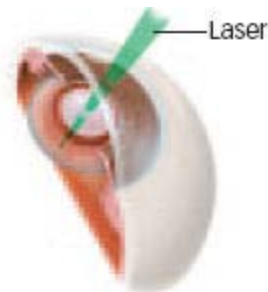
You will need to:

- Use the eyedrops as prescribed, and bring them with you to each clinic visit.
- Be careful not to rub or press on your eye.
- Use over-the-counter pain medicine, if necessary.
- Continue normal daily activities but avoid strenuous exercise for 1 week.
- Wear eyeglasses or an eye shield for protection, as advised by your doctor.
- Ask your doctor when you can begin driving.
- Call your doctor if you have any questions about your home-care instructions.

To administer your eye drops, first wash your hands. Then lie down or tilt your head back, and hold the bottle above your eye while bracing your hand against your cheek. Gently pull down your lower eyelid with the opposite hand without putting pressure on your eyeball. Instill one drop while looking away to avoid blinking, and wait one to two minutes between drops to prevent washing one out with the other.

Is a laser used during cataract surgery?

Laser surgery is not used in cataract removal surgery. However, the lens capsule (the membrane that holds the intraocular lens implant in place) sometimes becomes cloudy several months or years after the original cataract operation. If the cloudy capsule blurs your vision, your ophthalmologist can perform a second surgery using a laser. During the second procedure, called a posterior capsulotomy, a laser is used to make an opening in the cloudy lens capsule, restoring normal vision. This procedure takes just a few minutes, and is done in your doctor's office.



Posterior capsulotomy: a laser is used to make an opening in the cloudy lens capsule.

Will cataract surgery improve my vision?

The success rate of cataract surgery is excellent. Improved vision is achieved in the majority of patients. Only a small number of patients continue to have problems with their vision following cataract surgery, and your ophthalmologist will tell you if he anticipates this after a thorough examination of your eye.

Complications After Cataract Surgery

There are serious complications of cataract surgery, and you should be aware of these before undergoing cataract surgery. They include:

- Infection
- Bleeding
- Inflammation
- Detachment of the retina

All of these complications can be treated, and the chance of having a serious complication which could limit your vision is around 1 in 1000. Call your ophthalmologist immediately if you have any of these symptoms after surgery:

- Pain not relieved by nonprescription pain medication
- Loss of vision
- Nausea, vomiting, or excessive coughing
- Injury to the eye

Even if cataract surgery is successful, some patients may not see as well as they would like to. Other eye problems such as macular degeneration (aging of the retina), glaucoma or diabetic retinopathy may limit vision after surgery. Even with these problems, cataract surgery may still be worthwhile.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your ophthalmologist at:

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2929 McFarland Rd. • Rockford, IL 61107 • 815-654-2020 • www.6542020.com